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Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DACCA 05316 200649Z

16
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 038426
P R 200520Z NOV 74
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4952
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

S E C R E T DACCA 5316

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PK, BG
SUBJ: PAK-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

REF: STATE 252256

1. I REPORTED TO FOREIGN MINISTER KAMAL HOSSAIN NOVEMBER 19 ON YOUR DISCUSSION WITH BHUTTO IN ISLAMABAD WITH RESPECT TO PAKISTAN-BANGLADESH RELATIONS. I TOLD HIM IT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION THAT, IF THE BDG HAD BEEN CONCERNED THAT ANY DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES IN A JOINT COMMISSION WOULD PROVE INTERMINABLE, BHUTTO'S POSITION MIGHT SUGGEST THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME PROGRESS.

2. KAMAL HOSSAIN ASKED IF BHUTTO HAD MENTIONED REPATRIATION. I SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN NOTHING ABOUT REPATRIATION IN THE REPORT I HAD RECEIVED. I ASKED HIM IF THERE WAS ANYTHING STIRRING ON REPATRIATION, MENTIONING THAT I HAD SEEN A RUMOR IN ONE OF THE DACCA NEWSPAPERS THAT A LIMITED FURTHER REPATRIATION WAS IN THE WIND. HE SAID THAT THIS UNDOUBTEDLY REFERRED TO THE TWELVE THOUSAND BIHARIS WHO HAD BEEN CLEARED BY THE RED CROSS FOR REPATRIATION UNDER THE UNHCR AIRLIFT BUT HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO RETURN BEFORE THE AIRLIFT WAS SUSPENDED (SEE DACCA 4828). DURING THE DISCUSSIONS WITH BHUTTO, THE BDG HAD SAID THAT AT LEAST THIS CATEGORY OF PERSONS SHOULD BE BEYOND CONTROVERSY AND SHOULD BE
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ACCEPTED BY PAKISTAN. IN FOLLOWING UP ON THIS ABOUT TWO WEEKS

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AGO IN NEW YORK WITH THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE THERE, THE BANGLADESH REPRESENTATIVE IN NEW YORK HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THE PAKISTANIS WERE REPORTEDLY AGREEABLE TO RECEIVING FOUR THOUSAND BIHARIS FROM BANGLADESH AND TWO THOUSAND FROM NEPAL. THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE HAD EXPLAINED THAT THERE WERE NO FUNDS TO ACCOMPLISH THE TRANSFER OF THESE PERSONS AT THE MOMENT BUT APPARENTLY WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT FUNDS COULD BE OBTAINED, PERHAPS FROM SOME OF THE NEWLY-RICH OIL COUNTRIES. WHILE THE FOUR THOUSAND REFERRED TO DID NOT SQUARE WITH THE BDG'S LIST OF TWELVE THOUSAND, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID, THEY NEVERTHELESS WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEND THIS GROUP BACK AND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE IN TOUCH WITH THE UNHCR ABOUT IT.

3. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR THE YOUR ACTION, KAMAL HOSSAIN SAID IT WAS HIS INITIAL IMPRESSION THAT PAKISTAN'S POSITION HAD NOT CHANGED. HE RECALLED THAT THE ISSUE THAT HAD DIVIDED THE TWO SIDES DURING BHUTTO'S VISIT TO DACCA HAD BEEN WHETHER, AS BANGLADESH WISHED, THERE SHOULD FIRST BE A POLITICAL DECISION IN PRINCIPLE THAT THERE SHOULD BE A JUST APPORTIONMENT OF ASSETS, WITH THE DETAILS TO BE WORKED OUT BY A JOINT COMMISSION; OR WHETHER, AS THE PAKISTANIS HAD INSISTED, THE WHOLE ISSUE SHOULD BE REFERRED TO A JOINT COMMISSION WITHOUT A PRIOR DECISION IN PRINCIPLE ABOUT APPORTIONMENT. HE DID NOT SEE, HE SAID, THAT THIS ISSUE OF PRINCIPLE HAD FIGURED IN WHAT BHUTTO HAD SAID.

4. WHEN WE SPOKE ABOUT WHAT I SHOULD REPORT TO YOU AS TO WHERE THIS LEFT MATTERS, KAMAL HOSSAIN DECIDED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO REFLECT A LITTLE ON WHAT YOU HAD CONVEYED TO HIM ABOUT BHUTTO'S POSITION, NOTING THAT PRECISION WAS IMPORTANT IN THIS QUESTION. HE SAID HE WOULD EXPECT TO ASK ME TO SEE HIM AGAIN IN A DAY OR SO.
BOSTER

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Draft Date: 20 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Disposition Authority: CollinP0
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